

Impact of Education among Adivasis by German missionaries in India

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The Adivasi people were our ancestors. But presently most of the scholars (Western and Oriental) prefer the term ‘Tribe’ in lieu of Adivasi. It is insidious to those people because they were the real indigenous people of India. The term ‘Tribe’ designates the British Legacy in Indian context.¹ In fact, the Adivasi people have been part of pluralistic character of Indian society. The Ancient Indian texts are full of such evidences. The Adivasi had their own socio-economic and different cultural systems. They able to build their specific identity which is totally different from so-called mixed (Hybrid!) civilization.

From time immemorial the educational scenario of the Chotanagpur and its adjoining area, namely a vast part of Eastern India was neglected by alien rule; though this region had a glorious past. In Sixth Century B.C. Lord Buddha and Mahavira preached here; a lot of historical evidences still remain. In the field of Protestant Movement, Eastern India paved the way of religious awakening in almost all over in India. But unfortunately, this glorious history had fallen in a rat-trap. The education system of the tribal’s troubled with misgivings in medieval age and the age of the British Raj. They set aside; no initiatives would be taken for the betterment of those unoffending people. They were dependent on their own indigenous system of education. So, tribal education was heavily based on traditional pattern of informal training to conserve and perpetuate their culture generation to generation.

Education is the sum total of all different experiences by which man changes his past. It has been conceived of as training for better life and better social adjustment in a community or group. Every society develops through experience in its own way. Geographical location and socio-political urge make the differences between two countries. India is a prosperous land of

¹ Choudhury, I.K., in forwarding page, (2012), Tribes of North Bengal, Culture Society and Politics with special reference of West Dinajpur by Partha Dutta, Progressive Publishers, Kolkata, P-I

huge resources, on the other hand, scarcity of resources has been found in European countries. They want to achieve resources by any method. So, manifestation of experiences was totally different. There has been a development in education system by two ways education, formal and informal. Formal education requires a form of schooling, teaching and instruction. This type of education is consciously and carefully planned. On the other hand, Non-formal education is that type of education where child grows with others in a community from birth to death. India had followed the informal or traditional way of education from Vedic period. The missionaries came to India with new syllabus oriented bookish knowledge, whose chief aim was to spread western knowledge and Christian religion in newly occupied colonies like India. Not only that, another intention was to strengthen British Imperialism for imperial interest. So, their motive was to spread education to fulfil their own mottos because Education was the soft target to mould the people.

Education is a catalytic agent of cultural transformation from one generation to another. The Adivasi society of eastern India was a traditional and simple society. They had their own traditional way of learning, which was inherited by their ancestors. They had *Dhumkuria* and *Gitiora* where apart from other social and cultural activities, community living was practiced. The *Dhumkuria* was a school of social training from which the adivasi student learnt not only the indigenous lore but imbibed all the qualities which would make him useful member of the Oraon community. The Oraon children learn about their customs, folklore, songs, dances and different community activities from an early stage. On the other hand, *Gitiora* was a centre where Munda boys and girls learnt their folk tales, traditional customs and laws, agricultural methods, hunting and everything about their community life. They had their *Jatra* festivals and *akhra* where they learnt of the ways and means that make life worth living². After the advent of British power, their real miseries had started. British authority demanded in the first half of 19th Century that they were influenced by Benthamite Egalitarianism and it is their duty to serve for the natives of India. It is mentioned as ***White Man's Burden Theory*** by the imperial writers. They want to 'civilize' the adivasi people like their own ways, though administrative purpose was hidden.

After establishing British Empire the rulers observed that upper classes Hindus were learning in *Tol* and *Pathshala* and Muslims were in *Maktab* and *Madrasah*. Curriculum was religion

² Sinha, S.P. Conflict and Tension in Tribal Society, Concept Publishing House, New Delhi, 1993, P-139

centric and language was Sanskrit for the Hindus and Persian for the Muslims. Indigenous people were engaged in their traditional knowledge. When all the other oppressed people slowly but certainly were trying to get themselves assimilated into what we call `Mainstream` of society (at times at the cost of their own identities), the Adivasi people were engaged in a solitary journey of their own. That was the uniqueness of the indigenous people. The British rulers wanted to establish a unitary educational system including modern western curriculum for their imperial interest. Thus missionary efforts had started to educate the adivasis at the initial stage, after Macaulay's Minutes (1835) Government also took initiatives. The German Christian missionaries were the first missionaries who arrived at Ranchi from Berlin (Germany). The German Mission commonly known as Gossner Mission, though the actual name was **Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Mission(GELM)**. The original Chutia-Nagpur Mission was founded in 1844 by Pastor John Evangelist Gossner of Berlin, a Bavarian, by birth and an energetic promoter of Missions in all parts of the world.³ The credit for sending out missionaries to Bihar and various parts of the world goes to **Rev. J.E. Gossner (1773-1858)**. On December 12, 1836, he established in Berlin the Gossner Mission and sent out missionaries to different countries including India.⁴⁴ In December, 1844 Rev. Gossner had sent four missionaries- Rev. Emile Schatz (Team Leader), Friedric Batsch, August Brandt and H. Sanke. They left Calcutta for Ranchi on February, 1845 and arrived there in March, 1845.

When the Gossner Mission entered in Chotanagpur, the condition of the Adibasi people was terrible because of oppression. As they were very simple and ignorant in newly formed state law, other Non-adivasi people, like Zamindar, Land Lord, Police, businessman(both Indian and European),European *Sahib*, who came there for constructional work oppressed them heartlessly. The missionaries and their religion gave them hope for the betterment of life. They enhanced their sense of self-respect both as individuals and as a race.⁵ They widened

³ Hunter,W.W. Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol- xvi, Trubner and Company, London, 1877,P-423

⁴ Chatterton,Eyre. The Story of Fifty Years` Mission work in Chotanagpur, Palala Publication,2015, P- 2-3.

⁵ Cited on The Effects on the Aborigines of Chotanagpur of their contact with Western civilization, Bihar and Orissa Research Society Journal, 1930 Vol. xvii, P-381-386

their outlook and opened out new avenues of employment and usefulness. Overall, the Mission mediated their socio-economic, occupational and educational transformation.⁶

The missionaries had worked in an unfavourable condition; many of them died for climatic reason. But, still they built various educational institutions for boys and girls and established printing press where local languages, such as Hindi, Santali, Mundari, Kurukh etc. were also encouraged.

The South-West Frontier administrative division of colonial India was named as Chotonagpur Division. Mainly the south-west portion of West Bengal, Northern portion of Orissa, Eastern part of Chhattisgarh and approximately the entire Jharkhand and India were included in that very region. Chotonagpur is the collective name for the Ranchi, Hazaribagh and Kodarma plateaus, which have an area of 65,509 sq km. Jungal Mahal of present Bengal, is a major part of this geographical area. The main characteristic of this region was it is a hilly and forested area. The region came under the control of the British in the 18th and 19th centuries and annexed to the Bengal Presidency, the largest province of British India. After the Kol rebellion of 1831-'32, the division was exempted by the Regulation XIII of 1833 from general laws and regulations governing Bengal, and every branch of the administration was vested in an officer appointed by the supreme Government and called the agent to the Governor-General of India for the South-West Frontier.

In ancient times Adivasis were not endowed of their rights on land and forest on that area. The kings did not intervene on their ancestral rights. In Medieval ages some attempts were made to impose a few taxes on the Adivasi land, yet their rights were more or less intact.” There are references to forest-dwellers in ancient and medieval literatures (Bratya Nisada, Banjara etc.) and their characteristics namely their volatile nature, their mode of production, consisting of hunting and gathering, etc., are also noted. Many of the Adivasis established states and acquired political power or were absorbed into regional political systems which left them with considerable autonomy in the management of their affairs and control of resources.⁷

⁶ Kalapura Jose, Ed. Christian Missions in Bihar and Jharkhand till 1947, A Study by P.C. Horo, Christian World Imprints, 2014, P-109

⁷ Sinha, S.P.: Conflict and Tension in Tribal Society, Concept Publishing House, New Delhi, 1993, P-139

Their real miseries started when the Britishers had come. On the 12th August, 1765 with the grant of the Dewani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the East India Company, Jungle Mahal as a part of Bengal Presidency automatically went under the Company's rule. The British had intruded there for trade and administrative exigencies. Colonialism marked the beginning of radical change in adivasi situation. For the first time Adivasi resources, particularly land became a commodity. Yet they started clearing the forests and made land plough able. They enjoyed the fruit of their labour for sometime but soon outsiders began to pour in this area. The Adivasi world was opened up aggressively and totally to exploit their resources. Therefore, the Adivasis reacted more violently than any other community through a series of revolts and movements, which also reflected an urge on their part to come to terms with the new dispensation. New chapters revealed when missionaries came into the scenario. The missionaries came to India with the object of proselytization and they undertook various welfare activities to attract the poor adivasis towards Christianity. Though they had only limited success as far as proselytization was concerned their welfare activities were of immense help to the marginalized and subaltern sections of society. Gradually missionaries were attracted by the nothingness people of the hilly areas and they came into close contact with them.

Role of education in traditional simple society was very significant because it acted like a catalyst agent of great change in its own way. Traditional society as found almost every part of eastern India was a simple society in as much as it was oral, preliterate and customary. It is not a matter of fact that other non-adivasi communities were very much different from them, but the adivasi communities differed from them so far as mental level and environmental knowledge were concerned. Education is in essence transmission of culture from one generation to another. The role of education in a simple society is to cement and strengthen the fabrics of society; so that continuity should have been maintained.

The Adivasi society had their own institutions through which they had been imparted oral instruction and training to their youth for shouldering responsibilities. "Their hunts trained them for offensive and defensive use of weapons. They carried it from generation to generation till the Mughals came."⁸ But they had practically very little impact on their life except that their economy was faced with the concept of Neo-Zamindars and Jagirdars. It was

⁸ Ibid,P-139

only when the Britishers came to use their system of western education for and “civilizing the natives” that the real attempt to educate them started.

“Thus education through British efforts acted as an agent of change, positive and negative and it sometime created ferment. Here in the hills and valleys of Eastern India the spread of western education through the direct effort of the British administrative institutions as well as missionary bodies served as a factor of negative change, creating conflict and tension.”⁹ The spread of western education in India by the Britishers was at once a great factor of social change as well as conflict and tension in Indian society. This was possible through the exertion of Christian missionaries and others in the preliterate societies in Eastern India.

“The responsibility of spreading western education lay with the two officials-Cuthbert and Neave who made an attempt to establish college for the Kols of Ramgarh in 1831A.D.; but it had a short life. Captain Bird established a school in 1834A.D. at Chaibasa which later on got English classes attached to it on the assurance of the donation and support by the Zamindars and others gentries. But it was to the credit of German Mission in 1845A.D. to lay the real foundation of the western education in chotanagpur.”¹⁰

During the period of 1830 A.D. to 1857 A.D., the imperial authority had adopted two different forms of education. One helped in the real development of western education while the other one resulted in deception of education. In Bengal “the period from 1830 to 1857 has been described as the age of Duff from the educational point of view”¹¹ Duff’s Christian influence spread far and wide and his own institution drew the admiring attention of the people. All Calcutta, official, mercantile and military, Europeans and Indians, used to attend Duff’s periodical examinations of the students of his college, and marvel at the stream of useful information, scientific, historical, literary and theological that he pumped out of his Bengali pupils. It was the age of children’s guides to knowledge and Duff was Bengal’s guide. Besides the General Assembly’s Institution (1830), many other missionary schools and colleges were set up during this period which also made valuable contribution in the field of education. The Calcutta Medical College and St. Xavier’s College was started in 1835 and La Martiniere was founded a year later. About the same time the Deveton College was set up

⁹ Sinha, S.P. (1993), Conflict and Tension in Tribal Society, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi.) P-135

¹⁰ Sinha, S.P. Ed. ,Educating the Preliterate, Govt. of Bihar, Bihar Tribal Welfare Research Institute, Ranchi, 1990, Article by Dr. S.P.Sinha, Introduction of Education in British India- A Study of Tribal Bihar in Retrospect & Prospect, P- 77

¹¹ Chaudhuri, S.B.,Christian Missionaries, article in the History of Bengal, page no.598

and in 1841 the Irish Nuns of Loreto House came to Calcutta. With the beginning of Government financial aid to Mission schools in 1854 the missionary educational institutions began to thrive and increase in number.¹²

The overall contribution of the Christian missionaries to the life and thought of Calcutta and its adjoining area in the first half of the Nineteenth Century was notable. Duff launched a Crusade against Hinduism with almost a fanatical zeal and he sailed with the storm caused by the Young Bengal behind him. Henry Louis Vivian Derozio's Young Turk Brigade supplied fuel against the Oriental system of education. Derozio was like a magnet to his students. So, he had a planetary power upon his followers and an arbitrator for free thinking. He founded Academic Association (1828) with the help of his students. The discussions of the Association were like a revolutionary effort to change the Hindu religion and society simultaneously. The Derozians declared open war against the Hindu society by their epoch making programmes.

Thus Derozio's influence, gradually spreaded in other institutions like epidemic diseases. It is said that many a young learner renounced the sacred thread. Some gave up their daily prayers and when forced to do so recited passages from the Iliad instead of the sacred *mantras*. Some went even further. They shouted at orthodox Brahmins, "we take beef", and one student was reported in the paper to have greeted the image of Goddess *Kali* with "good morning madam". It is no wonder that the excesses of the young students alarmed and shocked contemporary society. Rumours about Derozio and his pupils began to spread and caused quite a stir in the City"¹³ Ram Mohan Roy was one of the earliest advocates of English education who demanded it for the intellectual advancement of his countrymen.¹⁴ So, he protested against the government's initiatives for the foundation of the Sanskrit College in Kolkata (then Calcutta). He wrote to Lord Amherst against such initiatives. Thus, western education encouraged in Kolkata and its adjacent area with a proper articulated system of education from the Primary school to the University. This scenario was totally different in the hilly and forested areas of Eastern India, where lot of Adivasi people were resided. Here I can produce a simple data, by which the educational differentiation or deception has been justified.

¹² Bose, Nemai Sadhan(1969),The Indian Awakening and Bengal, Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta.P-38

¹³ Bose, Nemai Sadhan(1969), The Indian Awakening and Bengal, Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta.P-38-39

¹⁴ Sinha N.K.and Ray Nisith R, Orient Longman, Second impression, 1993, P- 520

University	Year of establishment
Calcutta	1857
Patna	1917
Utkal	1939

From the above data, we can easily conclude that British Government followed a two-fold policy for the spreading of western education. In Eastern India, Kolkata gained much educational facilities; but unfortunately other places were in deprivation. Christian missionaries had come to manage the gap. Because from time immemorial to the Ninetenth century, a large portion of Eastern India (Today's Bihar, Jharkhand, Odissa, Assam and a part of Bengal) had remained densely forested, as was testified by the official reports and travel accounts. The dense forests, together with the compact hills of the area, made the region virtually inaccessible to invading armies and, as the British reiterated time.

British administration claimed to pursue a policy of non-interference in adivasi questions. For instance, in all matters pertaining to the killi, the Assistant Political Agent had to refer to the decision of a panchayat, composed of those who were most respected and looked up to in the village society.¹⁵ British administration had an apathy to spread education among the adibasi though variegated recommendations were there by the Government. Viceroy Lord Ripon appointed an education Commission by the leadership of Sir William Hunter in 3rd February, 1882. Hunter Commission had pointed out that "The Government had failed to give education to the aboriginal races of India and that special measures were required to overcome the difficulties which surrounded the question"¹⁶ But the officials did not want the adibasi to get prominence in society. The administrators thought that if they become aware of their treachery, they will surely protest. Due to the Christian missions little progress was made for formal education among the adivasi .The Missionaries have played a major role in the spread of education by establishing many mission schools. They chose education as a way of proselytisation because they wanted to build a strong relationship with the parents through their children. Education was a part of the policies of missionaries and it helped them to create social pressure on the converts to send the children to schools. The spread of education was not uniform. Certain areas like the north eastern region ,Sundargarh of Orissa ,Chotanagpur of Bihar ,Darjeeling of west Bengal etc were better exposed to

¹⁵ Das Gupta Sanjukta, Adivasis and the Raj, Socio-Economic Transition of the Hos, 1820-1932, Orient BlackSwan,2011, P-119-120

¹⁶ Srivastava, L.R.N. and Kaul, C.L. Third All India Educational Survey: Hostel Facilities for Scheduled tribes. National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi, 1979, P-1.)

education programmes. The converts benefitted from the programmes but they were returned as Hindus. adibasis remained illiterate. The extent and spread of illiteracy among the adivasi can be observed from the census reports.¹⁷ Literacy among animistic tribes in 1901 was only 8 males per mile and practically no female was literate.

In 1911, literacy among the animistic tribes 11 males and 1 female in a thousand of each sex was able to read and write. In 1931, literacy among adivasis was 7 per mile. The decline in the literacy rate of the adivasis was because many of the literate tribesmen.¹⁸ Another fact of Government's apathy can be mentioned. The British Government sanctioned Rs. 430 out of total grant of Rs. 1200 for the creation of minor and vernacular scholarships for Santal and Paharia boys in 1873. The following table would show the extent of education in the whole of Bhagalpur and Santal Pargana Division.¹⁹

Year	Number of Schools	No. Of students
1889-90	155	6125
1890-91	155	5947
1891-92	155	4599
1892-93	155	6231
1893-94	155	6197
1894-95	N.A.	N.A.
1895-96	N.A.	N.A.
1896-97	N.A.	7629
1897-98	N.A.	6452
1904-05	N.A.	13401
1905-06	N.A.	25727

Beside that a few technical schools initiated at Deoghar and Monghyr. The survey schools which were opened in Dumka, Katikund, Taljhari and Sahebgang, Santal students / apprentices were paid a stipend of Rs. 3 a month.

¹⁷ Natarajan, D. " Extracts from All-India Census Reports on Literacy", Census of India, 1971 Census Centenary Monograph No. 9, 1972, P-118.

¹⁸ Cited in Sinha, U. P., Tribal Education and Literacy, in Sinha, S. P. (Ed.), Educating the Preliterate,Bihar Tribal Welfare Research Institute, Ranchi, 1990, P-166.

¹⁹ Reports of Progress of Institutions , Yearly Report , 1898. Sinha, S.P. Conflict and Tension in Tribal Society, Concept, New Delhi,1993, P- 149.

The German missionaries were the pioneers in the field of education both males and females, in Chotanagpur. The first Christian Mission School was started at Ranchi by this Mission in 1846. The first students were orphans, about twenty in number, who had been rescued during famine and put under the care of missionaries by a magistrate. The parents were at first reluctant to send their children to this School fearing that the missionaries would make them Christians.

At the split in the Gossner Mission in November 1868, most of the teachers and students joined the Anglican Mission. According to the report of the Director of Public instruction for 1872-'73, the Mission had a seminary, three boarding schools and one village school. In October 1874, Lord Northbrook, the viceroy of India, visited the Boarding School (boys) at Ranchi, granted Rs. 50 for prizes and presented a portrait of Queen Victoria to the School. According to the statistics of the Mission for 1874, there were Boarding Schools at Ranchi, Purulia and Chaibasa, with 209 boys and 64 girls, and several village schools having 956 Christian and 358 Non-Christian pupils. This statistics proves that Government was indifferent to spread proper western education in those areas.

During the recent years the number of students in Ranchi had been rising steadily. Some boys who had learnt the requirements to get their living by cultivating lands were sent to their homes by the end of 1872, so other students can come. Many students could not get admission in the schools due to poverty.

At the end of March, 1873, there were 228 books. The boarding school contains 118 boys and 62 girls and 48 children attended the school as day scholars. There was an average attendance of 203. The whole school had 10 classes with its own teachers. The only non Christian teacher employed was a *pandit* who taught Hindi to the upper classes. The standard of education had risen during the year throughout the school and the training class.

The Adibasis had no written language. The missionaries tried to learn the various tribal languages, which had different *killis(gotras)*. The languages learnt by them were Oraon, Mundari and Santali. Even Bengali had to be learnt in order to work in Purulia. Taking all these into account, the missionaries rightly decided to learn Hindi which was undoubtedly understood by many if not by all. Rev. Henry Batsch often talked with the local people in Oraons. In 1850, an Oraon tract was published by the missionaries.

The German missionaries took earnest endeavours in the study of tribal literature and languages. The missionaries who came earlier, used Hindi for communication and after 1868, much importance had been given on the study of adivasi languages. Rev. (Dr.) A. Nottrott

and Rev. Hann, played a prominent role in enriching tribal languages. When Rev. Hann enriched the Oraon language, Rev. Nottrott enriched Mundari with their literary contributions.²⁰ Rev. Hann had prepared the *Kurukh* (Oraon) Grammar and a small *Kurukh* Dictionary, which were published in 1900 and 1903, respectively.²¹²¹ Rev. Hann also translated Bible centric stories in the Oraon language. Another Missionary, Rev. Flex published *Oraon Grammar* and *Oraon Dictionary*, which were more popular among the Oraons. Rev. Nottrott wrote for the Munda community. He published *Mundari Primer* and *Mundari Hymn-book* from Benares in 1871.²² In 1881, he published the first *Mundari Grammar* in German language to help the German missionaries, who were novice in Chotanagpur. Rev. Wagner translated this book in English. The Mundari translation of the New Testament was published and presented to the Gossner Mission during the Golden Jubilee celebrations in 1895.²³ In course of discussion, it has to be mentioned that Rev. Nottrott conferred Honorary Doctorate degree for the contribution in Mudari language by the University of Leipzig in Germany. As the books were being published in local languages, it resulted in the enhancement of the interests of adivasis towards education. As a result, there had been a steady rise in the number of students.

The First World War caused destruction to the Gossner Mission and allied schools. Due to that incident, all German missionaries left the Chotanagpur region. Before their departure from Ranchi in July 1915, they requested Bishop Westcott of the Anglican Mission to maintain the schools. The Bishop accepted their request, helped in emergency operations, collected funds and maintained the schools in proper order. In Annual Report of the Chotanagpur Mission in 1916, stated that the Gossner Mission had then 36 Boarding Schools, 240 village Primary Schools and 13 Kindergartens with about 9,000 students. Anglican

²⁰ Kalapura Jose, Ed. Christian Missions in Bihar and Jharkhand till 1947, A Study by P.C. Horo, Christian World Imprints, 2014, P-108

²¹ Ranchi District Gazetteer, 1970, P- 506

²² Roy. Sarat Chandra. The Mundas and their Country, 1912, Gyan Books.* Pvt.Ltd. P-227

²³ Swavely C. H. The Lutheran Enterprise in India, 1706-1952, Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India, 1952, P- 135

support was withdrawn after 1919 due to the financial crisis. As a result, many of the schools became defunct. There was a proposal to close down the Gossner High School too.²⁴

In October, 1919, An Advisory Board was created to improve the situation. In 1921, The Gossner Church had one High School, 6 Middle Schools and 208 Primary Schools with 4764 boys and 1483 girls. In the same year Rev.I. Cannaday became the Secretary of the Advisory Board. The Bethesda Girls` Upper Primary School at Ranchi was raised to the Middle Standard in the same year.

The Advisory Board sanctioned a large amount for the education of the young men. Their chief aim was to prepare some leaders for the betterment of Christian religion. To fulfil this motto, Mr. Joel Lakra, a young Oraon graduate, was sent to Chicago (USA) for the study of Christian Theology. It has to be mentioned here that he was the first member of the Church who went foreign country for the study of Christian Theology. He returned Ranchi in 1927 with the M.A., and S.T.M. degrees.²⁵ Mr. Dhan Masih Panna was the first adivasi graduate and also became the first adivasi magistrate in Jharkhand. After the split of the Advisory Board in 1928, the German missionaries had gone back. Then Church Council took initiatives for managing the schools. Council appointed a Head Supervisor, named Mr. Nirmal Soy, for the management of the Middle School and Primary Schools. He held the position for many years.

In 1932, 96 Primary Schools were handed over to the Ranchi District Board for financial reasons. The Gossner Church had one High School, 6 Middle schools and 160 Primary Schools in 1939.²⁶

The hilly areas of Eastern India were a scrubland. Here Lac crop was a major component in the economic life of the adivasi people. The adivasis, who belong to the weakest section of our society, having limited agricultural resources, have largely depended on this commodity as a subsidiary occupation for their subsistence since time immemorial. *Palas, Ber, Plum-trees* produce bulk of lac. But the cultivation of Lac was carried out by these people in a rather casual manner. There were no systematic methods of Lac cultivation. It was also observed, since the very inception, the cultivation of Lac itself was carried out rather half-heartedly and carelessly indicating, thereby, lack of interest among the adivasis for lac

²⁴ Swavely C. H. , The Lutheran Enterprise in India, 1706-1952, Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India, 1952, P-60

²⁵ Swavely (1952). P.-65

²⁶ Kalapura Jose.Ed. Christian Missions in Bihar and Jharkhand till 1947, P-106

production. Beside general education the tribal students undertook technical trainings also. Some of the institutions imparting training in Lac-making, embroidery also.²⁷ In Chaibasa, girls learnt the art of weaving. As a result, the German missionaries founded a Lac School for the benefit of the adivasis. In 1905, Rev. A. Nottrott sent two aboriginal Christian girls to Kalimpong to learn Lac cultivation properly. The Government granted Rs. 200 for their training. After returning from Kalimpong, the German Mission Lac School opened at Ranchi in 1906.²⁸ It helped to the adivasi people to get greater economic benefits. This helped adivasis to seek new vocations in life. An over dependence on agriculture reduced by this way. Simultaneously the Church guaranteed employment to the converted youths after the end of their education. They became priests, teachers, nurses, cooks, chaprasis, malis and so on. Not only the missionary institutions but they were employed in government institutions also as a teacher, munshis, surveyors, school inspectors etc.²⁹

The teaching process was hampered by lack of knowledge on the part of the teacher of :- (a) the local dialect, (b) that value system, (c) the indigenous idiom and (d) the timing of events. Learning process by adivasi students was affected also because every student was not equal attentive. The main problem was concerned with curriculam. It lays too much emphasis on reading, memorising and reciting rather than on experiencing and application of knowledge.³⁰ Though local languages were encouraged, books contain foreign materials. The subject matter was always unknown to the adivasi students. Most of the time they have taken firm possession of art of cramming. In spite of that their home atmosphere was not suitable because their family was surrounded by various needs.

The Adivasi people have been traditionally known for many good things in their culture, like- truthfulness, honesty, integrity, simplicity and mutual co-operation. But these rare traits are ending steadily under the impact of modernity. The impact of modern pattern of education has been more pronounced on the adivasis living near the industrial and urban areas than in the interior villages isolated from the main-stream of the larger society and predominantly engaged in agriculture. Along with the forces of modernization, urbanization and industrial growth, education- both formal and non-formal, has become a powerful

²⁷ Roy. Sarat Chandra. The Mundas and their Country, 1912, Gyan Books. Pvt.Ltd. P-351

²⁸ Ibid. P-253

²⁹ Ibid. P-351

³⁰ Sinha, S. P. Ed. ,Educating the Preliterate, Govt. of Bihar, Bihar Tribal Research Institute, Ranchi, 1990, Article by K. Mohan Rao, Planning Educational Technology for Tribes, P-144

catalytic agency in social transformation. The adivasi society thus passed through a transitional phase in its cultural evolution. That also enabled them to attain a better socio-economic status and dignity, in addition to the change in their attitudes, opinions and behaviour patterns. The aims and objectives of the education are to prepare the individual economically independent. By this way, one may earn his or her livelihood sufficiently and lead his or her life comfortably. But against this norm, education has created problems on the adivasi people. Because greater adivasi society had followed the traditional way of living. In the adivasi philosophy of life, the needs were very limited; their beliefs were primitive and animistic, social customs superstitious, rituals full of faith in sacrifices and offerings, witchcraft and sorcery. The income was generally below the poverty line. However, they were always eager to feast drink and dance, whatever the occasion. This gave them some psychological relief from the boredom of a deprived life.³¹

Christianity subdued some social harshness also. According to the belief of the adivasis, if one became a Christian the witches and souls would not capable to touch them. This lessened their faith in witchcraft. Moreover, Christianity also helped its adherents to combat alcoholism, which was very much prevalent in this region.³²³² So, a new dimension has opened in their day to day life. The converted adivasis have got services and social prestige, which was very motivational to other adivasi and non-adivasi people. They were also attracted in this new way of life. Education increased the number of conversion. Not only that, The adivasis were directly contacted with the European teachers, such as Nottrott, Hann, Wagner and others, had already motivated for a jolt against their local leaders (*Sardars*). Thus western education and the missionary teachers prepared a new ground among the adivasis who clamoured for their self-identity.

The expansion of Christianity in adivasi areas of Eastern India has accelerated the process of modernisation on one hand while it has created social tension and discrimination on the other hand based on educational differentiations among converted Christians and non-converted adivasis, who were the majority in society. The missionaries thought that *Adim Jati Seva Mandal* was the main obstacle to their religious propaganda. This adivasi organization was a soft corner for the non-converted adivasis. The work of the missionaries deserves all over

³¹ cited in Problems and prospects of Tribal Education- A Sociological Study, M. Mehrotra, in Sinha, S. P. (Ed.), Educating the Preliterate,Bihar Tribal Welfare Research Institute, Ranchi, 1990, P-148.

³² Sen, Padmaja, Ed. ,Changing Tribal Life, A Socio-Philosophical Perspective, C.K. Paty, Changing Tribal Life of Chotanagpur, Christianity as a Catalyst, Concept,2003, P-99

praise but it cannot be denied that they sincerely believed that Christianity alone will lead to the salvation of the adivasis. It was their main weakness.

It has been found that education had played a major role in eliminating many traditional values related to superstitions that served as a great obstacle for development and progress. Partially it went through half-hearted commitment or total rejections of several innovations beneficial to a community even though the people were logically convinced about its merit. Education makes the mind ‘open’ and increases the ‘acceptability’ and ‘appreciation’ of innovations.³³

It can be mentioned that change cannot be forced upon a person, change must come from within. Before any change is introduced in society, it must be brought in their value system and values could be changed only through proper education. The missionaries introduced education for their own benefits but not for the upliftment of the adivasi society. For their imperial and religious interest, they made a half-hearted attempt due to which the light of education could not approach all sections of society equally. Thus, there had been rise in social tension among the adivasis.

The German missionaries arrived in the forested and mountainous regions of Eastern India for spreading Christianity. They believed that the people of these regions were so much annoyed and distressed that they would easily be attracted towards them if they talk about how to bring progress in society. They did not want to make any real progress. If they intended to do so, they must have informed the Government about the real needs of the people but they never did that. The Government officials also did not want to solve the problems of the adivasi people wholeheartedly. Many epidemic diseases broke out in these mountainous and forested regions. Violent attacks of wild animals and dangerous insects were frequent in these places. There were no tools for modern means of living. So the officials took a step behind. The missionaries were exceptions. Even after facing a lot of pain, they roamed from one place to another for spreading Christianity. When the missionaries took initiatives to spread education in these regions, the Government accepted their proposals, sometimes also provided money for the noble works. If a person or institution does a particular job half-heartedly, then he can never get success in that job. The job can never be fully completed. The same happened with the missionaries in their objective of spreading

³³ Roy Kanchan edited Education and Health Problems in Tribal Development A Study of National Integration Concept Publishing company, 2008, Article by K.N. Sahay, Education and value system: A Key-note Address. p-29

education. The missionaries wanted to win over the hearts of the adivasis; but they failed. People were converted due to poverty not in the interest of western education. They realised that if they come to the close contact with the missionaries, they will get some opportunities. Neither the Government nor the missionaries did not desire for the total change of the adivasi society. Missionaries acted like a catalyst or an agent of the British Raj. By the introduction of vernacular they want to be acquainted with local people for their imperial advantage. They were cheated in every aspects of life. Although everything (Forests, Mines, Precious stones and Rivers etc.) was taken from them, still majority of them did not get sufficient food to eat. So, we can easily marked out that food problem was a hindrance to the educational development of the adivasi people.
